

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 04191 060344Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 060255Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9977
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4191

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, BG, BM
SUBJ: MUSLIMS FOR BURMA IN BANGLADESH: COMING BURMESE-BANGLADESH
DISCUSSIONS IN DACCA

1. THE BDG ANNOUNCED ON JULY 4 THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM WOULD BE RESUMED IN DACCA ON JULY 6. PRESS REPORTS, BASED ON A BDG BRIEFING, INDICATE THAT THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION WILL BE HEADED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN AND INCLUDE THE HOME SECRETARY AND THE COMMANDER OF THE BANGLADESH RIFLES. THE BURMESE WILL INCLUDE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER U TIN OHN; COL. MIN GUANG, COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN COMMAND; AND LT. CDHOM KYAW MUANG, CHAIRMAN OF THE ARAKAN STATE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL.

2. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON JULY 3, WAS HOPEFUL REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR THE DISCUSSIONS. HE NOTED THAT THE BURMESE TOOK THE POSITION THAT THEY WISHED TO AGREE UPON A SOLUTION. THE BURMESE HAVE IN-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DACCA 04191 060344Z

FORMED THE BANGLADESHIS THAT THEIR DELEGATION WILL BRING A LIST OF NAMES OF 16,200 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE MISSING FROM ARAKAN STATE. HUSAIN ESTIMATED THAT EACH HOUSEHOLD WOULD NUMBER FROM FOUR TO FIVE PERSONS AND CONSEQUENTLY THE BURMESE LISTS COULD COVER AS MANY AS 80,000 REFUGEES IN CAMPS IN BANGLADESH. THE BDG POSITION REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT ALL REFUGEES SHOULD RETURN TO BURMA.

HUSAIN REPORTED THAT THE FLOW OF REFUGEES ACROSS THE BORDER HAS RECENTLY BEEN SHARPLY REDUCED AND MANY REFUGEES CURRENTLY JOINING BANGLADESHI CAMPS HAVE PREVIOUSLY CROSSED THE BORDER. CONSEQUENTLY, THE RATE OF INCREASED REGISTRATION IN THE CAMPS EXCEEDS THE CURRENT DAILY FLOW. ALTHOUGH HUSAIN DID NOT MENTION A NUMBER, HE SAID THE DAILY FLOW WAS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THE 2,000 EARLIER REPORTED. THE CURRENT CAMP POPULATION, HE SAID, WAS 202,000.

3. HUSAIN SAID THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETINGS WOULD INCLUDE THREE ITEMS: REFUGEES; BORDER DEMARCATION; AND GROUND RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE AUTHORITIES OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS ALONG THE BORDER. HUSAIN WAS HOPEFUL THAT AGREEMENT MIGHT BE REACHED ON GROUND RULES. HE REPORTED THAT THE BURMESE DID NOT HAVE ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT WITH ANY OF THEIR NEIGHBORS BUT SEEMED INTERESTED IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH BANGLADESH. THE BANGLADESHIS HAVE MODELED THEIR PROPOSALS AFTER THE RULES WHICH ARE IN EFFECT ON THE INDIAN BORDER.

.. THE BANGLADESHIS APPROACH THE LATEST IN THE SERIES OF BILATERAL MEETINGS ON THE SUBJECT WITH HOPE THAT SOME ACCOMMODATION CAN BE MADE. WHILE THEIR PUBLIC STANCE IS THAT ALL MUST BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO BURMA, IN PRIVATE WE HEAR MORE MODERATE (AND, PERHAPS, MORE REALISTIC) ESTIMATES OF NUMBER WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 DACCA 04191 060344Z

ABANDONED HOMES.
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Message Attributes

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